Once the user has completed the verification process, the electronic document is routed or processed according to the instructions as shown at 214. Preferably, the electronic document is routed to only one destination for each image generating action.

While in the preferred embodiment the present invention is implemented in software, as those skilled in the art can readily appreciate it may also be implemented in hardware or a combination of software and hardware.

Although the preferred embodiment has been described in detail, it should be understood that various changes, substitutions, and alterations can be made therein without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims. It will be appreciated that various changes in the details, materials and arrangements of parts, which have been herein described and illustrated in order to explain the nature of the invention, may be made by those skilled in the area within the principle and scope of the invention as will be expressed in the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A system for processing of electronic documents comprising:

image generating means adapted for generating an electronic representation of a paper document;

the image generating means including means adapted for receiving an associated template sheet inclusive of an instruction representative of a desired document processing operation;

optical recognition means adapted for recognition of the instruction;

means adapted for generating an instruction signal in accordance with a recognized instruction; and

means adapted for controlling processing of the electronic representation of a paper document in accordance with the instruction signal.

2. The system for processing of electronic documents of claim 1 further comprising means adapted for identifying a location of relevant markings on the template sheet.

3. The system for processing of electronic documents of claim 2 wherein the means adapted for identifying a location of relevant markings comprised as at least one of check boxes and fill-in boxes.

4. The system for processing of electronic documents of claim 1 further comprising means adapted for optically identifying handwritten characters on the template sheet.

5. The system for processing of electronic documents of claim 1 wherein the instruction signal directs routing of the electronic representation of a paper document in accordance with the instruction as indicated by optically identified handwritten characters.

6. The system for processing of electronic documents of claim 5 wherein the routing includes at least one of electronic mail transmission, facsimile transmission, FTP transmission, HTML transmission, and optical image rendering on an associated display.

7. The system for processing of electronic documents of claim 6 wherein the electronic representation of a paper document is routed to at least one of an electronic mail server, a document management system, an image generating device, and an Internet server.

8. The system for processing of electronic documents of claim 1 further comprising verification means adapted for verifying the desired document processing operation.

9. A method for processing of electronic documents comprising the steps of:

generating an electronic representation of a paper document;

receiving an associated template sheet inclusive of an instruction representative of a desired document processing operation;

optically recognizing of the instruction;

generating an instruction signal in accordance with a recognized instruction; and

controlling processing of the electronic representation of a paper document in accordance with the instruction signal.

10. The method for processing of electronic documents of claim 9 further comprising the step of identifying a location of relevant markings on the template sheet.

11. The method for processing of electronic documents of claim 10 wherein identifying a location of relevant markings comprises identifying at least one of check boxes and fill-in boxes.

12. The method for processing of electronic documents of claim 9 further comprises the step of optically identifying handwritten characters on the template sheet.

13. The method for processing of electronic documents of claim 9 wherein the instruction signal directs routing of the electronic representation of a paper document in accordance with the instruction as indicated by optically identified handwritten characters.

14. The method for processing of electronic documents of claim 13 wherein the routing includes at least one of electronic mail transmission, facsimile transmission, FTP transmission, HTML transmission, and optical image rendering on an associated display.

15. The method for processing of electronic documents of claim 14 wherein the electronic representation of a paper document is routed to at least one of an electronic mail server, a document management system, an image generating device, and an Internet server.

16. The method for processing of electronic documents of claim 9 further comprising the step of verifying the desired document processing operation.

17. A computer-readable medium for processing of electronic documents comprising:

image generating means adapted for generating an electronic representation of a paper document;

the image generating means including means adapted for receiving an associated template sheet inclusive of an instruction representative of a desired document processing operation;

optical recognition means adapted for recognition of the instruction;

means adapted for generating an instruction signal in accordance with a recognized instruction; and

means adapted for controlling processing of the electronic representation of a paper document in accordance with the instruction signal.

18. The computer-readable medium for processing of electronic documents of claim 17 further comprising means adapted for identifying a location of relevant markings on the template sheet.

19. The computer-readable medium for processing of electronic documents of claim 18 wherein the means adapted for identifying a location of relevant markings comprised as at least one of check boxes and fill-in boxes.

20. The computer-readable medium for processing of electronic documents of claim 17 further comprising means adapted for optically identifying handwritten characters on the template sheet.

21. The computer-readable for processing of electronic documents of claim 17 wherein the instruction signal directs routing of the electronic representation of a paper

document in accordance with the instruction as indicated by optically identified handwritten characters.

22. The computer-readable medium for processing of electronic documents of claim 21 wherein the routing includes at least one of electronic mail transmission, facsimile transmission, FTP transmission, HTML transmission, and optical image rendering on an associated display.

23. The computer-readable medium for processing of electronic documents of claim 22 wherein the electronic representation of a paper document is routed to at least one of an electronic mail server, a document management system, an image generating device, and an Internet server.

24. The computer-readable medium for processing of electronic documents of claim 17 further comprising verification means adapted to verify the desired document processing operation.

25. A computer-implemented method for processing of electronic documents comprising the steps of:

generating an electronic representation of a paper document;

receiving an associated template sheet inclusive of an instruction representative of a desired document processing operation;

optically recognizing of the instruction;

generating an instruction signal in accordance with a recognized instruction; and

controlling processing of the electronic representation of a paper document in accordance with the instruction signal.

26. The computer-implemented method for processing of electronic documents of claim 25 further comprising the step of identifying a location of relevant markings on the template sheet.

27. The computer-implemented method for processing of electronic documents of claim 26 wherein identifying a location of relevant markings comprises identifying at least one of check boxes and fill-in boxes.

28. The computer-implemented method for processing of electronic documents of claim 25 further comprises the step of optically identifying handwritten characters on the template sheet.

29. The computer-implemented method for processing of electronic documents of claim 25 wherein the instruction signal directs routing of the electronic representation of a paper document in accordance with the instruction as indicated by optically identified handwritten characters.

30. The computer-implemented method for processing of electronic documents of claim 29 wherein the routing includes at least one of electronic mail transmission, facsimile transmission, FTP transmission, HTML transmission, and optical image rendering on an associated display.

31. The computer-implemented method for processing of electronic documents of claim 30 wherein the electronic representation of a paper document is routed to at least one of an electronic mail server, a document management system, an image generating device, and an Internet server.

32. The computer implemented method for processing of electronic documents of claim 25 further comprising the step of verifying the desired document processing operation.